7/17/75

Mr. Geoffrey Norman, Articles Editor
Playboy Magazine
919 N. Michigan Ave.,
Chicago, Ill. 60611

Dear Jeff,

Thanks for the return of the copy of Whitewash IV and for your efforts with it with your book people.

What I wrote about was Post Mortem. You have my only xerox of it, meaning that I can lay my hands on. Jim McKinley gave me to understand some time ago that the ultimate decision on it was negative.

I believe that I told you in February it was my only spare copy. I have others out of my possession merely as precautions.

It is dangerous to handle the master copy because corrections can fall off. Thus I have no xeroxes of the (slightly) edited and condenser first two parts. With the last part I can't run the risk of making other xeroxes and, frankly, can't afford it.

I have needed the copy Playboy has had for a half year for a couple of months. For about four months I spoke to nobody about it. Once it became clear that Playboy had no interest I did make other efforts. In the past month alone I have needed that copy three times. Each of the three publications that are interested knew the offer is not exclusive, But I had no copy to give any one. In two cases someone came here and I showed a few of the documents. I await anyswers based on this alone, which is one hell of a way to try to sell ancillary rights.

I did phone you three times. The first two there was no callback. The third I spoke to your assistant and explained the need.

While I would much prefer not to have to face the conflict, when I have to decide between selfish, financial interest and what I regard as higher obligations I have no touble. I do what I think a man must. In this case it means that because of all that is now going on and all that I can forsee I will print this book myself. I don't relish increasing my debt when I am 62 and have no regular income but I believe I must do this. With the other things I also must do I can't be certain of when I can have Post Mortem printed but I have made printing arrangements and with no new emergencies I expect to have copies in about two months. If there are delays I do not think it will stretch to three months. This means that should Playboy change its mind it will not be able to print before I will.

Meeting the need I perceive means more to me than money. The attention from ancillary rights is another matter. Losing that I regret. I also regret that this long delay and total lack of communication of any kind has foreclosed me from other magazines, unless one will consider post-printing rights.

There remains several newspaper possibilities. At least one of these is considering paying the printer's bill for the advance rights. So, I would appreciate it if you would now, promptly, get that copy back. When your assistant promised to send it promptly I had expected her to do this and I had made arrangements for one to come here and read it.

Jim has told me of an alternative project that is being considered. While I'd have been happier if Playboy considered both I believe I can be of considerable help with it. If Playboy wants this it will have to be on a different basis.

In a bureaucracy like yours there is no way for you to learn of this separately, but seven or eight years ago I was ~~mx~~ asked to help on another project. If this one goes through I have in Chicago right now in the hands of a friend some of what I got for Playboy then. Plus some of what I kept on getting. It is all of the quite sophisticated stuff of one of the more effective paramilitary gangs. Their secret papers, a stack maybe three inches high.

I was part of an investigation on this general subject before you were born. The volumes I edited are a stack 15-18" wide on my shelves.

Few people realize the scope of the work I have undertaken. I have completed the research for three relevant books I'll never write now. In addition, I have given away one that would be better as a non-fiction novel. In that form it could make a movie. The black writer to whom I gave this material was immediately fired. I've lost contact with him. If he and my material have disappeared I know how to replace that stuff at nominal cost. Were it to be a long article it could still become a movie. Probably a book, too.

You will find that in the not distant future there is going to be more attention to what is the major part of my work, political assassinations. The TV nets are now spending a fortune on it in their own ineffecient, dishonest way. The CBS schedule calls for November showing. I don't know how many entirely different teams and crews they have working on this project but two separate ones have been in touch with me. My guess is that they have at least four. One is coming here tonight. One has been here.

With King and JFK I have done virtually all of the basic work. To the degree one can I also own a l those rights. Had Playboy accepted my offer it would have had the benefit of all this TV attention.

The magnitude of this operation is that each team has specialists on different part of the story. The crew coming tonight is interested in a book I had to lay aside five years ago, the one for which I filed the suit the results of which led me to publish Whitewash IV. About three weeks ago I had to decline a meeting with still another part of this part because there was something else ~~mx~~ I had to do then. They'll come later.

Despite the nuts, self-seekers and strong official opposition, the subject has caught fire. As I predicted in February, it has become very commercial.

What will remain for after November I don't know but I suspect it will be much from my own work alone.

In time there will be a Congressional investigation, too. Not by the Church committee, which will, I believe, content itself at most with trying to determine if it can recommend one. Post Mortem ought provide the answer to that question.

In this I'm trying to be informative, not vindictive. I believe much good copy remains for the future.

Late as it now is for me, please send me the xerox of Post Mortem. I still need it and still have some possibilities with it to give others to read.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

Jim: Under date of 7/14 he sent me the copy of WW IV with a letter less than two lines long. Can one but wonder how there remains a corporate eye sharp enough to see skin?